Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MEXICO 08066 261859Z

43
ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8594

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 8066

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OCOM,; US, MX
SUBJECT: POSSIBLE VISIT OF GOVERNOR OF PUERTO RICO TO MEXICO

REF: STATE 210679; MEXICO 7959

1. DURING A LENGTHY CONVERSATION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER RABASA YESTERDAY I MENTIONED PLANNED FORTHCOMING VISIT OF GOVERNOR OF PUERTO RICO. I NOTED GOVERNOR HAD BEEN INVITED BY MEXICAN BAR ASSOCIATION AND THAT DURING HIS VISIT, HE WISHED TO CALL ON PRESIDENT AND FOREIGN MINISTER WHILE MEMBERS OF HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD WISH TO CALL ON APPROPRIATE MEXICAN OPPOSITE NUMBERS. RABASA SAID HE WAS AWARE OF THIS PROJECTED VISIT AND BELIEVED IT WOULD BE MUCH PREFERABLE IF IT DID NOT

TAKE PLACE. RABASA SAID THAT, BECAUSE OF HIS FRIEND-SHIP FOR US, HE WOULD RECEIVE GOVERNOR IF HE CAME BUT THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA WOULD BE WILLING TO RECEIVE HIM (ALTHOUGH HE HAD NOT DIS-CUSSED THIS MATTER WITH THE PRESIDENT YET). RABASA SAID HE BASED HIS NEGATIVE VIEW OF THE PRE IDENT'S PROBABLE ATTITUDE ON THE FACT THAT WHAT HE REPEATEDLY REFERRED TO AS "PROGRESSIVE" ELEMENTS IN MEXICAN PUBLIC OPINION BELIEVED PUERTO RICO SHOULD BE INDEPENDENT.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MEXICO 08066 261859Z

RABASA STATED THAT PRESIDENT WOULD NOT WISH TO OFFEND

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

THESE ELEMENTS OF OPINION HERE BY RECEIVING GOVERNOR.

2. RABASA THEN WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE KNEW ALL ABOUT PUERTO RICAN ELECTIONS AND FACT THAT ONLY EXTREMELY SMALL MINORITY VOTED FOR INDEPENDENCE. NEVERTHELESS HE ADDED THAT THE PROGRE SIVE ELEMENTS IN MEXICAN OPINION TO WHICH HE REFERRED FELT THAT THE ELECTION RESULTS WERE LARGELY BASED ON ECONOMIC AND NOT POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND THAT SENTIMENT FOR VINDEPENDENCE WOULD BE MUCH GREATER IF PRESENT STATIS WERE NOT TIED TO ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR FREE EMIGRATION TO US.

3. RAOASA ADDED THAT IF GOVERNOR WERE TO COME AND TO SPEAK TO BAR ASSOCIATION AND ATTEMPT TO DEFEND PRESENT POLITICAL SET-UP IN PUERTO RICO, HE WOULD BE STRONGLY ATTACKED IN THE "PROGRESSIVE PRESS" (HE MENTIONED "SIEMPRE", "EXCELSIOR", AND "EL DIA" IN THIS CONTEXT). IN FACT HE THOUGH THAT MERE PRESENCE OF GOVERNOR HERE ESPECIALLY IF HE PAID ANY CALLS ON MEXICAN OFFICIALS WOILD LEAD TO UNFAVORABLE PRESS COVERAGE AND PERHAPS TO ATTACKS AGAINST MEXICANS WHO RECEIVED HIM AS WELL.

4. COMMENT: FOREGOING IS OF COURSE UNFORTUNATE BUT SEEMS TO REPRESENT A CONSIDERED VIEW OF THE FOREIGN SECRETARY. IF DEPARTMENT FEELS THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY OF TACTFULLY DISSUADING GOVERNOR FROM COMING, WE LILL OF COURSE TRY TO MAKE THE BEST OF IT BUT IN THE FACE OF RABASA'S OPPOSITION, WE PROBABLY CANNOT COUNT ON VERY MUCH HELP. IN ANY EVENT INTERVIEW WITH ECHEVERRIA WOULD SEEM TO BE EXCLUDED. IF TRIP COULD BE POSTPONED INDEFINITELY IT WOULD OF COURSE BE EASIEST COURSE IN CONTEXT OF US-MEXICAN RELATIONS. IN ANY EVENT, RABASA DEFINITELY DOES NOT WISH HIS NAME USED AS SOURCE FOR FOREGOING AND I BELIEVE HIS DESIRE SHOULD BE RESPECTED THOUGH DEPARTMENT WOULD OF COURSE HAVE TO CITE UNNAMED HIGH-RANKING MEXICAN OFFICIAL IF IT WERE TO ATTEMPT TO DISSUADE GOVERNOR. I WILL BE IN DEPARTMENT FOR A FEW DAYS BEGINNING NOVEMBER 1 AND WILL BE GLAD TO TALK TO CABRANES IF DEPARTMENT

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DESIRES, AND TRY TO EXPLAIN MEXICAN OFFICIAL RELUCTANCE

TO HAVE THE GOVERNOR AT THIS TIME. CONCEIVABLY WE COULD BASE OUR ARGUMENTS ON SOMEWHAT UNSETTLED LOCAL SITUATION IN LIGHT OF RECENT WAVE OF KIDNAPPINGS LEADING TO FOUR HIGHLY-PIBLICIZED DEATHS.

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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

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